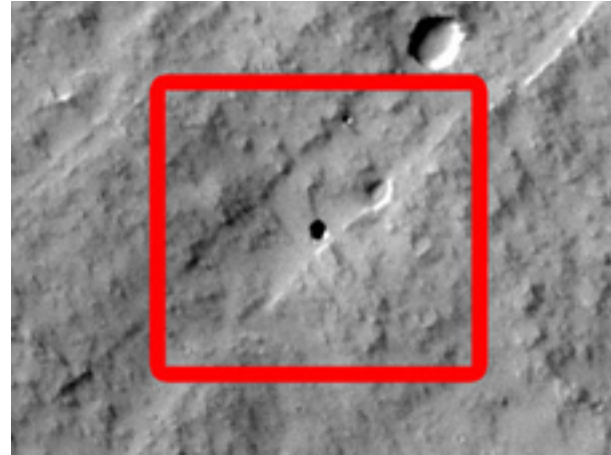


Martian Caves Found

Written by Larry Nelson

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Seventh Graders Find a Cave on Mars 6.22.10 - NASA



Sixteen seventh-graders at Evergreen Middle School in Cottonwood, Calif., found the Martian pit feature at

the center of the superimposed red square in this image.

Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/ASU

Using the camera on NASA's Mars Odyssey orbiter, 16 seventh-graders at Evergreen Middle School in Cottonwood, Calif., found lava tubes with one pit that appears to be a skylight to a cave. Mars Odyssey has been orbiting the Red Planet since 2001, returning data and images of the Martian surface and providing relay communications service for Mars Rovers Spirit and Opportunity.

The students in Dennis Mitchell's science class were examining Martian lava tubes as their project in the Mars Student Imaging Program offered by NASA and Arizona State University. According to the university, the imaging program allows students in upper elementary grades through to college students to participate in Mars research by having them develop a geological question to answer. The students actually command a Mars-orbiting camera to take an image to answer their question. Since MSIP began in 2004, more than 50,000 students have participated.

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